

REMARKS

Claims 1, 21, 22, and 23 have been amended. Claims 1-23 remain pending in the application. Applicants respectfully request further examination of the application, as amended.

Applicants have amended claims 1, 21, 22, and 23 to incorporate the limitation of a retro-reflective member having the ability to reflect a ray of light substantially in the direction of its source. While the specification in the application as filed, on page 6, lines 14-15, defined retro-reflective to *mean* "having the ability to reflect a ray of light substantially in the direction of its source", the original claims including a retro-reflective means or member did not explicitly recite this definition. It is noted that the Examiner may have misunderstood Applicants' use of the word "means" at page 6, lines 14, to refer to a functional "means" (noun) rather than the common use of "means" (verb) as a synonym for "is defined as." Applicant submits that the sentence is grammatically correct only with the use of "means" to define the term "retro-reflective," and, as is well known, the Applicant may be his own lexicographer.

In the Final Rejection, the Examiner appears to suggest that an amendment incorporating such a definition would overcome the rejection. By making these clarifying amendments, Applicants believe that the claims are allowable. Additionally, Applicants maintain that none of the references cited by the Examiner alone or in combination teach or disclose a retro-reflective means or member as defined and claimed in the present invention.

Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendment under 37 CFR 116 on the basis that the amendment will place the application in condition for allowance and it could not have been earlier presented because Applicants were unaware of the Examiner's understanding of the sentence on page 6, lines 14-15. No additional search or examination is necessary. Alternatively, the amendment will place the application in better form for appeal.

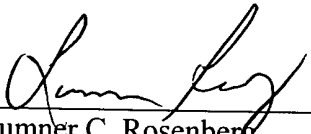
In the Final Rejection, the Examiner has maintained his rejections of all rejected claims for the reasons as stated in the first Office Action. These rejections are respectfully traversed for the reasons stated in the first Office Action response. Furthermore, in general, the dependent claims 2-19 recite further limitations to independent claim 1. Since, as stated above, the independent claims as amended are allowable, the dependent claims should also be allowed.

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For the foregoing reasons, Applicant believes that all the claims are allowable. A Notice to this effect is respectfully solicited. The Examiner is invited and encouraged to directly contact the undersigned if such contact may enhance the efficient prosecution of this application to issue.

No fee is believed to be due in connection with this response. However, the Examiner is authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 14-0629.

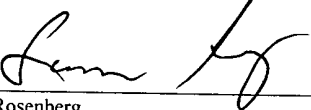
Respectfully submitted,


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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA. 22313-1450 on the date shown below.


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4/24/03
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